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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SWFAS EXPANDS SERVICES
TO BONITA SPRINGS/ESTERO**

Southwest Florida Addiction Services (SWFAS) announced expansion plans Thursday to better serve the residents of Estero and Bonita Springs.

Effective September 11, SWFAS will begin offering counseling services one day a week at the Estero United Way House, 20658 Highland Ave. Assessments and group treatment will be offered for adults each Tuesday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Additional hours will be offered as demand warrants.

“The Estero/Bonita Springs area is growing and the need for our services is growing too,” said Diane Clayton, Director of SWFAS Adult Outpatient Services.

SWFAS served 121 individuals from Bonita Springs and 43 individuals from Estero last year, according to SWFAS. An additional 20 Bonita Springs residents were admitted to the SWFAS Detoxification Center last year.

The announcement comes on the eve of National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month in September. The month-long observance is a nationwide celebration of those in recovery from substance use disorders, sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“Alcohol and drug addiction affect not only those with the problem, but also the people around them, such as family, employers, and friends. There are many Southwest Florida residents who need treatment, but do not receive any help for their drug or alcohol problem,” said SWFAS CEO Kevin B. Lewis.

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Nearly 21 million people needed but did not receive treatment in 2005, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. One year after treatment, people report a significant reduction in their alcohol and drug use, increases in employment and income, and decreases in homelessness.

Drug use disorders alone are estimated to cost American businesses approximately \$128.6 billion in lost productivity each year, and alcohol dependence alone is estimated to cause 500 million lost workdays annually. In 2005, nearly 77 percent of adults with substance use disorders were employed. Reported job problems, including incomplete work, absenteeism, tardiness, work-related injuries, mistakes, and disagreements with supervisors are cut by an average of 75 percent among employees who have received treatment, according to SAMHSA.

“Substance use disorders can take an enormous toll on productivity in the workforce and can have far-reaching consequences for families and communities, both emotionally and financially,” Lewis said. “Every September, National Recovery Month reminds us of the importance of making treatment accessible, addresses the hurdles some face when seeking treatment, and educates our community that treatment is effective and that recovery is possible.”

SWFAS is Southwest Florida’s most comprehensive substance abuse treatment and prevention program, operating from nine offices throughout Lee and Hendry counties. Since 1980, SWFAS has helped more than 63,000 residents in Lee, Charlotte, Glades and Hendry counties rebuild their lives. SWFAS offers treatment services at all levels of intensity including residential, outpatient counseling, and group therapy. In addition, SWFAS provides detoxification services for adults, prevention programming for all ages, and an Employee Assistance Program for about 80 Southwest Florida businesses. SWFAS is a United Way agency.

For more information about the new SWFAS services in Estero/Bonita Springs, call 489-9389 or e-mail d_clayton@swfas.org.